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Cuba Not Red, Says

CLEARWATER (AP) —

A retired Army general turned news correspondent has returned from Cuba where he says all is not as black as reports indicate.

Brig. Gen. Hugh B. Hester, who makes his permanent home at Chapel Hill, N.C., said in an interview with the Clearwater Sun that Fidel Castro "is still unquestionably the boss" and has the support of about 75 per cent of the Cuban people.

Hester, an accredited correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance, said "it is simply not true that Cuba is now a Communist satellite."



HESTER

"When Anibal Escalante, an old-time Cuban Communist and later a member of the Cuban National Directorate, was discovered favoring his former Communist colleagues, he was fired by Castro . . . and the decision stuck in Moscow as well as in Havana," he said.

HE CLAIMS FIDEL BOSS, PEOPLE FINE

Hester, formerly on the staff of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, said he saw no indications of starving Cubans and that few were hungry. He said there was no actual manpower shortage.

"More than half the land now being cultivated is still in private hands and many small enterprises are privately owned and operated," Hester said.

Hester quoted National Agrarian Reform Institute Director Rafael Rodriguez as saying the Cuban government was prepared to pay compensations for nationalized U. S. industries in Cuba.

"any time the United States government restores the sugar quota and buys in excess of three million tons annually."

Hester said he lived on food allotted under the Cuban rationing program for two weeks and "felt no ill effects."

He said Cubans living on the farms and in the country are feeling better than ever before.

"This year the people are healthy, happy and busy. Engaging in sports and dancing, playing on the beaches . . . often supplying labor for some of the projects where they themselves will live."

The diplomatic and trade break between Cuba and the United States, he said, has caused "some bottlenecks, but no crises." Cuba is in the midst of

foreign supply sources, a completely new domestic distribution system, and a huge industrialization program.

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